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Doctor Who Quit Smoking Cites Tobacco As Lung Cancer Cause

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A nationally recognized surgeon who smoked three to four packages of cigarettes a day for nearly 40 years set aside this habit four months ago and in Portland Thursday expressed some definite opinions about cigarettes and cancer. He is Dr. Isador Ravdin, professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and a member of the surgical team which operated on President Eisenhower when he was stricken with ileitis in 1956.

Dr. Ravdin was one of the guest lecturers Thursday at the 2nd annual Oregon Cancer Conference at the Portland-Sheraton Hotel.

"Tobacco is an important cause of lung cancer," the visitor said in an interview.

"The more that I have studied it, the more I am convinced that heavy smoking causes not only lung cancer but a number of other disorders in people," he explained.

Smokers Take Risk

"Regardless of what is said," he continued, "the individual who smokes heavily exposes himself to the risk of cancer of the lung."

Anyone who does smoke heavily should fully understand the risk involved, the surgeon added.

Of his own past habit of smoking, the lecturer said he recognized that he had been taking a much greater chance

of dying of lung cancer than he "had any reason to take."

Dr. Ravdin also discussed the American Cancer Society's program to educate the public on cancer danger signals and reviewed some of the advances which have made surgery more effective in combating cancer.

The visitor said the society's education program has served not only to alert individuals on the symptoms of cancer, but has caused physicians to make more thorough checks for the disease in general examinations of patients.

Chances Improve

In the field of surgery, Dr. Ravdin said that one of four persons who would have died of cancer a decade ago is being saved because of improved surgical procedures and because of earlier detection of the disease.

The doctor said improved procedures now make it possible for one-stage operations for cancer, whereas ten years ago the same procedure would have been done in several stages.

Better pre-operative and post-operative care of cancer patients also has made surgery for this disease more effective than it was a decade ago, Dr. Ravdin said.

Another factor making for an improved situation in surgery is the growing use of medical doctors who have made anesthesiology their life's profession.

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CANCER RATE VARIES IN HAWAIIAN SURVEY

The several racial groups in Hawaii have varying susceptibility to cancer, Dr. Walter K. Quisenberry of the State Department of Health in Honolulu recently reported.

He told a conference on culture, society and health here that incidence of stomach cancer in Hawaii was highest among Japanese men. Primary cancer of the liver is most frequent in Filipino men, possibly because the diets of Filipino men are higher in carbohydrates and lower in protein and vitamin B-1 than those of other ethnic groups.

Cancer of the nasopharynx occurs most often in the Chinese. Dr. Quisenberry said this might be due to irritation from hot liquids.

Filipino and Japanese men have the lowest incidence of lung cancer in Hawaii. These men have probably smoked fewer cigarettes over the years than Caucasian men, Dr. Quisenberry said.

The breast cancer rate is now five times higher among Caucasian than among Japanese. Japanese women have been slower in giving up the nursing of their children. The rate seems to be increasing as the Japanese women stop nursing babies.

Caucasian women have cancer of the large intestine more frequently than any other ethnic group.

Caucasian men have cancer of the prostate gland about nine times more frequently than Japanese men.